



Department of Justice

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TAYLOR MAN SENTENCED FOR HATE CRIME

A Taylor, Mich. man was sentenced to 17 years and three months in prison today for violating the civil rights of an African-American family by attempting to burn down the family's house, the Justice Department announced today.

Wayland Mullins, age 38, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge George Caram Steeh in federal court in Detroit. Mullins was previously found guilty of conspiring to violate the family's housing rights, conspiring to obstruct a federal investigation, and using fire in the commission of a felony.

"These despicable acts were bred of ignorance and hate," said Wan J. Kim, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "The federal government will continue vigorously to prosecute individuals who engaged in such bias-motivated violence."

"Every American enjoys the civil right to live in any community in our nation without the fear of being racially intimidated," said Stephen J. Murphy, U.S. Attorney for Eastern District of Michigan. "The significant sentence imposed in this case evidences that such hatred has no place in our society and my Office's continuing commitment to meet it with the full force of federal law enforcement power designed to stamp it out."

The evidence at trial established that on July 28, 2002, Mullins and several of his neighbors gathered together and discussed burning down the home of an African-American family that had recently moved into the neighborhood. Following this conversation, Mullins broke a window in the family's home, poured in a flammable substance, and lit the substance on fire while a co-conspirator, Michael Richardson, acted as a lookout. After the fire, Mullins and Richardson attempted to obstruct a federal investigation into the arson by lying to federal investigators about their knowledge of the crime. The jury found that Mullins' actions were racially-motivated.

Richardson, who pleaded guilty in federal court to civil rights and obstruction of justice violations in connection with this incident, testified against defendant Mullins at trial. A third defendant, Rick Cotton, also participated in the discussion before the fire and in the cover-up afterward, and was convicted by a jury for lying to federal investigators and a federal grand jury and for obstructing justice. Cotton also pleaded

guilty to conspiring with Mullins, Richardson and others to violate the family's housing rights.

Ricky Cotton was sentenced in April, 2007 to 78 months in prison and Michael Richardson is scheduled to be sentenced on September 6, 2007 at 2:00 PM.

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